

TEMPE - U.S. Rep. Harry E. Mitchell today commemorated the 75th anniversary of Social Security at Friendship Village in Tempe.

More than 60 residents of the retirement community joined Mitchell and officials from the Social Security Administration, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, who were on hand to provide information and answer seniors' questions about the benefit.

"It was terrific to meet with people and provide real, straight-forward information about Social Security, which has helped keep tens of millions of seniors financially stable and out of poverty since the 1930s," Mitchell said. "It is essential that we maintain and strengthen social security. The volatility of the investment markets during the recent economic crisis has demonstrated how dangerous efforts to privatize social security could be."

President Franklin Roosevelt enacted Social Security in 1935 as part of his New Deal program during the Great Depression. At the time, pensions were almost non-existent, and a majority of seniors were unable to support themselves after retirement. As a result of creating Social Security, millions of seniors today can live their lives with dignity and independence - instead of poverty and despair.

Currently, more than 50 million Americans rely on Social Security's guaranteed benefits for retirement security or to make ends meet, put food on the table and stay in their homes. Over 94,000 individuals in Arizona Congressional District 5 currently receive Social Security benefits, and over 1 million seniors in Arizona receive Social Security benefits.